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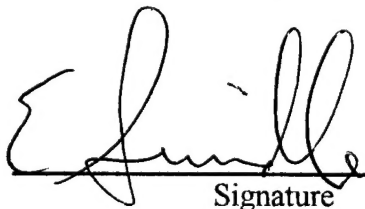
**THE U. S. MILITARY, NGO'S AND CMOC: STAYING  
CONNECTED AND ACHIEVING UNITY OF EFFORT DURING  
MOOTW**

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

  
Signature

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15. Abstract: The U. S. military and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) have found themselves increasingly committed to working together during complex humanitarian emergencies. This humanitarian intervention will no doubt continue and will necessitate increased cooperation. The Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) is the fulcrum of this civil-military relationship. We must focus closely on the continuous improvement of CMOC's dynamic processes and harness the efforts of NGO's in order to keep the military/NGO team connected and achieving unity of effort. The author reviews two MOOTW cases and offers recommendations to improve the CMOC process.	

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## **ABSTRACT**

The U. S. military and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) have found themselves increasingly committed to working together during complex humanitarian emergencies. This humanitarian intervention will no doubt continue and will necessitate increased cooperation. Harnessing the efforts of NGO's can be thought of as a force multiplier in that it accommodates organic shortfalls in the military and creates a synergistic effect of the total resources available in theater. The Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) is the fulcrum of this civil-military relationship. It is not so much a designated place as it is a function of personnel. To achieve unity of effort with NGO's during MOOTW, we must strive to improve the coordination processes and outputs of the CMOC. With this understanding, NGO and military policymakers can draw upon their unique strengths to develop and implement policies, procedures, and coordinating mechanisms that improve the effectiveness of their joint efforts.

This paper examines two MOOTW operations involving a CMOC; Operation Restore Hope, Somalia; and Operation Uphold Democracy. Derived from these studies are recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the CMOC.

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"Instead of thinking about warfighting agencies like command and control, you create a political committee, civil-military operations center (CMOC) to interface with nongovernmental organizations. These become the heart of your operations as opposed to a combat or fire support operations center."

Lieutenant General A. C. Zinni, USMC  
Commanding General, I MEF

## INTRODUCTION

As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the U. S. military will continue to face uncertainties and challenges. The rapidly changing global environment, that is characterized by regional instability, the growth of pluralistic governments, and unconventional threats will require even greater civil-military cooperation.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. military will continue to find itself involved in MOOTW and interfacing with various international and indigenous players that shape the NGO/Military relationship. The NGO players **CAN** and **DO** act as force multipliers which allows commanders to do more without proportionate increase in force size or cost.<sup>2</sup>

The CMOC is the fulcrum of this civil-military relationship. It is not so much a designated place as it is a function of personnel. Since there are no promises of MOOTW shortages, we must strive to continuously improve the coordination process and outputs to ensure the efficient

and effective use of the CMOC. Doing so will allow the U. S. military to stay connected with the NGO's and achieve unity of effort during MOOTW.

This thesis will focus on mechanisms to improve the CMOC as the operational interface between the U. S. military and NGO's during MOOTW using the following humanitarian intervention cases:

1. Operation Restore Hope (Somalia, December, 1992)
2. Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti, October, 1994)

### **OPERATION RESTORE HOPE**

Somalia. The very word remains a touchstone of emotion for those who participated in the United Nations sponsored humanitarian intervention that took place from December, 1992, to March 1995. This review will focus primarily on the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) and the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) in Mogadishu itself. It is here that dismay occurred between the two communities (U. S. military and NGO's) and therefore where there are the most lessons to be learned.

Prior to all the media attention in the summer of 1992, it was just a few NGO's that had had a continual presence in Somalia through the very worst of the anarchy. The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC),

Doctors Without Borders/France (MSF), the International Medical Corps (IMC), World Concern, Save the Children (UK), and SOS (an Austrian NGO) were among the very brave few the U. N. had left. As a result, these stout-hearted humanitarians were not just the only western source of information on Somalia, they also represented the most up-to-date information on the overall humanitarian emergency. They were not in any way utilized prior to the U. S. military intervention.<sup>3</sup>

During the planning phase for the deployment, there was no contact at the operational level [the First Marine Expeditionary Force, the unit around which the JTF was established] with representatives of the humanitarian organizations working in Somalia.<sup>4</sup> The actual Marines, who came ashore on December 9<sup>th</sup>, were merely given a list of NGO's in the area. Their first priority, in any case, would be establishing a secure area. For an operation defined as humanitarian, and in support of those who knew the situation best, the NGO's were conspicuously left out of the equation. The common rebuttal to such an assertion is that collecting such information is virtually impossible. Where would one start?

By the end of January, 1991, the Inter-NGO Coordinating Committee for Somalia (INCS) had been formed



in Nairobi, Kenya. On February 5, 1991, it agreed upon the following statement of purpose:

1. To establish open, clear and effective communication between Somalia authorities and NGO's;
2. To coordinate resources and programs of agencies working in the same areas of relief, to assure maximum effectiveness thereby eliminating conflicts of efforts and duplication of capital assets;
3. To establish a forum through which all NGO's interested in involvement in Somalia can gain and share knowledge of existing and planned programs; and
4. To promote donor confidence in a coordinated NGO effort toward Somalia through effective communications to attract donor funding.<sup>5</sup>

There was thus a well-established forum through which to contact NGO's operating in Somalia. Moreover, the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Special Relief Coordinator, Jan Westcott, had been operating, and continued to operate, in Somalia since November of 1990. As it turned out, Ms Westcott was eventually contacted by the military in a ship-to-shore phone call in early December.<sup>6</sup>

Once the Marines came ashore in Mogadishu, they moved quickly to establish an expeditionary infrastructure that

would facilitate security and the delivery of food to starving Somalis.

Designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator for the U. N., Dr. Philip Johnson, an American and President and CEO of CARE, had been the director of the HOC since October, 1992. A supporter of military intervention Johnson was ready to work with the JTF.<sup>7</sup> Southern Somalia was soon divided into eight Humanitarian Relief Sectors (HRS), with a sectional HOC established in each one. This sectoral HOC worked directly with the forces in that HRS. Importantly, the Mogadishu HRS HOC also served as the National HOC. As a result, this HOC would work directly with the UNITAF staff, according to its national charter, but it would not work directly with the military forces directly assigned to Mogadishu.

A CMOC was established on December 11<sup>th</sup> and collocated with the National HOC with I MEF's G-3 shop as its Director. He would focus largely on NGO/UN relations and operate accordingly to four "principal missions:"

1. Serve as the UNITAF liaison to the humanitarian community and UNOSOM headquarters;
2. Validate and coordinate requests for military support;
3. Function as the UNITAF Civil Affairs Office;

#### 4. Monitor military support in the regional HOC.<sup>8</sup>

The collocation of the CMOC with the HOC improved on a number of critical concerns. First, the physical presence of the CMOC at the HOC was viewed as the military's "reaching out" to the humanitarian community—an important first perception because the NGO's did not know quite what to expect from the military (not having met or talked with the military until December 9<sup>th</sup>.) Second, the resulting coordination proved to be "tremendously effective" as there was "no other means of getting security information" to the NGO's. Third, the collocation provided a fulcrum through which the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) could input its expertise.

Of course, in reference to the CMOC "some NGO's just didn't want the military there at all and went out of their way to make it difficult as possible." But these folks proved to be the exception rather than the rule. By all accounts, the CMOC did everything possible to collaborate and contribute to a coordination atmosphere.

Despite these efforts, however, the NGO/military relationship was plagued by persistent parochial perceptions. There was the feeling among the NGO's that the information sharing was a one-way street, with the military's inclination toward secretiveness preventing a

reciprocal flow. There was also the perception that the military simply did not want to be bothered with the NGO's.

On the military's side, there was the feeling that the NGO's simply had no concept of how the military operated. There was also the sense that the NGO's generally kept their distance but called upon the military only when they needed them. Moreover, there was a general difference of opinion among the UNITAF officers as to what their exact relationship with the NGO's was: direct or indirect support? Or both?

Thus, two views on the nature of the mission emerged. One view held that the mission was only to provide security; this would allow the NGO's to provide relief. Those holding this view pointed to the focus on security in the mission statement as a whole. They also noted that there was no other discussion of helping NGO's anywhere in the OPLAN. Another view was that the military was there to help the NGO's - both directly and indirectly. They also said that helping the NGO's was so obviously underlying the reason for being in Somalia that of course the military should assist the NGO's in any possible manner.<sup>9</sup>

Competing interpretations were the direct result of a mission statement that did not provide any specific

guidance, as the humanitarian intent was conspicuously absent.

Another seemingly inexplicable missing component from the intervention preparation was the lack of Army Civil Affairs (CA) units involved or eventually sent, it appears unusual that they would not be fully utilized. While Charlie Company of the 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion was sent to Somalia, the reserves, despite receiving call-up orders, were never activated. One suggested reason for this conspicuous absence is that the Marines thought they did not need them. However, all eight regional HOC's were supposed to have a CA team but there were not enough trained CA units, therefore the two largest HOC's were the only ones supported. Moreover, the call-up of such units generally indicates a longer term commitment. The CA units also implied nation building, something that was clearly not part of the mission statement. The Marines, as a short-term expeditionary unit, fit the political climate of Washington, D. C.

The 96<sup>th</sup> CA after action report states that "the basic civil affairs mission for Restore Hope was to minimize civilian interference with military operations. The military operation was security for the relief effort." To think that just delivering food was going to solve the

Somalia problem was short sighted; to have CA personnel to provide security to the military operations was NOT the CA intended mission. This further supports why the CMOC Headquarters in Mogadishu did not receive the support they had hoped to receive.

#### **OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY**

In Operation Uphold Democracy, humanitarian activity and support to NGO's was not a primary focus of the military forces deployed, but more of a supporting effort. The mission statement of the Multinational Force was as follows:

When directed, combined JTF Haiti conducts military operations in Haiti under the operational control of USACOM to protect and, if required, evacuate U. S. citizens, designated Haitians and third country nationals; to establish and maintain a stable and secure environment; to facilitate the return and proper functioning of the GOH; to provide logistical support to coalition forces; to professionalize the military component of Haitian public security forces; and on order, to turn over responsibility for ongoing operations to the government of Haiti or designated international organizations.<sup>10</sup>

There were two CMOC operations in Haiti: one was in the J3-CA section of the JTF Headquarters in Port-au-Prince, and the other was in Cap-Haitien as a part of the 2d Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Headquarters. At the JTF Headquarters, there was little or no contact with NGO's via the CMOC. Instead, a Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HAAC) was established as a meeting place for NGO's, and requests for support were then sent to the CMOC cell in the J3. A HACC was developed based on the fact military planners knew that there were some NGO's who were reluctant to work with the U. S. military. Previous experience with many of these organizations had proven that they were uncomfortable being around the military in a tactical environment. By physically locating the HACC away from military operation centers, but keeping it under control of the CMOC, coordination with these organizations was facilitated. Another reason for the physical separation of the HACC and CMOC was to ensure the NGO's did not have to come into the Joint Operation Center (JOC) because the JOC was a secure area.

Some of the NGO's were confused by the term "HACC"; many of them had experiences in working through the CMOC in previous operations and therefore sought to make coordination there again. Despite repeated direction to

contact only the HACC, many organizations called directly into the CMOC with requests.

The physical separation of the HACC and CMOC also presented a communication problem. Commercial phone communications between the CMOC, HACC and NGO's were unreliable and eventually all parties involved in CMO had to rely on handheld radios.<sup>11</sup>

In Cap-Haitien, the 2d Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, fire support element had been converted into a CMOC. Initially, the Brigade Fire Support Officer was the OIC but later on in the operation, a CA officer was available for duty in the CMOC. The Cap-Haitien CMOC also used a small HAAC, which was manned by a Captain and an NCO.

As previously stated, the CMOC at JTF Headquarters had very little contact with NGO's. CMO operations were of a general nature and often competed with other functions, which included such tasks as providing linguists to the JTF forces to coordinating the repair of President Aristides's residence. At the Cap-Haitien CMOC, the mission was primarily CMO; even the mission statement of the 2d Brigade included "conduct CMO operations." The commander's intent included "Enhance efficiency and effectiveness of NGO/PVO/GOH operations." From this direction, the CMOC at Cap-Haitien coordinated such projects as:



1. Humanitarian assistance/mail flights
2. Establishing trust and climate of reconciliation
3. Electricity, water, and sanitation
4. Fresh water production
5. Port operations
6. Mayor's council; committees of justices, ministers,  
and organizations.

The CMO activity was directed toward convincing the Haitian people that the U. S. (and later the UN) were there to help.

Operation Uphold Democracy continued to demonstrate the need for the military to harness the capabilities of NGO's via the CMOC. Both Operation Restore Hope and Operation Support Democracy point out the importance of integrating the capabilities of NGO's in MOOTW and the challenges associated with achieving unity of effort with NGO's in theater.

#### **MAKING IT BETTER**

Case studies on the U. S. interventions in Somalia and Haiti provide a view on the importance of harnessing the NGO's capabilities. With CMOC being the coordination center between civilian organizations and the military, what should be done to improve the CMOC process in order to

enhance the force multiplier effect of the NGO's? The following recommendations are submitted:

1. NGO's must be a conspicuous part of the planning equation when it is anticipated they will be participating in MOOTW. In the Somalia case, NGO's were in place almost two years before U. S. military intervention occurred. They had a well-established forum through which they could be contacted. Had they been contacted early on and included in the operational planning they could have provided valuable up-to-date information on the overall humanitarian emergency. When conducting the Commander's Estimate of the Situation (CES), NGO's should be included in the friendly order of battle since they **CAN** and **DO** act as force multipliers. Subsequently, NGO's should be part of the mission statement and commanders' intent to lessen confusion regarding the military's relationship with the NGO's.
2. Establish a regional CMOC for each geographical CINC and staff it with people who are smart in civil affairs. Since there are no promises of MOOTW shortages, no geographic CINC should expect to be immune from conducting an operation involving the U. S. military and NGO's. With CMOC as the fulcrum for the NGO force multiplier, it needs to be an integral and functional

part of the CINC's staff. Duties of the CMOC element should include:

- (a) establishing a data base to include monitoring and tracking of NGO's; i.e., who is where, what can they provide, and points of contact;
- (b) developing a comprehensive and coherent doctrine for CMOC; one with detail and consistency. As in the Haiti case, some NGO's were confused by the term "HACC" since they had been used to working their requests through a CMOC;
- (c) providing education and training to key staff members on the CMOC concept and the use of NGO's as force multipliers during MOOTW;
- (d) establishing interagency seminars to include NGO representatives. This could be a valuable tool in ensuring that the military and NGO's understand how each other works thus forming a basis of knowledge and trust for cooperation;
- (e) coordinating the integration of NGO's in exercises that involve MOOTW;
- (f) establishing a "fly-away" CMOC team; this would enable establishment of the CMOC prior to or at least at the outset of the operation. Operation

Restore Hope was underway two days before a CMOC was established.

3. Use the CMOC as an intelligence/information fusion center. NGO's are often overlooked by the military as a source of intelligence and information for a number of reasons. In some cases, military leaders assume they know the answers prior to deployment and do not believe coordination of their actions with NGO's is necessary. As in the Somalia case, the NGO's were not just the only western source of information; they also represented the most up-to-date information on the overall humanitarian emergency. The NGO's are mixing with the local population on a regular basis. They may hear and see things that could be valuable in enhancing force protection and mission accomplishment for the military and NGO's. NGO's don't have to "knowingly" be a source of intelligence but the information they bring back to the CMOC can be fused with intelligence to gain a better estimate of the overall situation.

Whether it is humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, or peace enforcement, the NGO's and the military will interact. A well-trained and staffed CMOC is the key link that will tie the two elements -U. S. military and NGO's- together. Implementation of the aforementioned

recommendations will improve the CMOC process and enable the U. S. military and NGO's to advance together during MOOTW.

## **CONCLUSION**

The U. S. military/NGO relationship is a fundamental trait of our present and the era into which we are entering. The role of civilians (NGO's) in MOOTW, no matter how pure the "battlefield", will only increase.

Coordination and cooperation must be closer. The CMOC is the fulcrum of this relationship; not so much a designated place as it is a function of personnel and dynamic processes. As the center, which represents the intersection of both communities' efforts, we must focus closely on the continuous improvement of the CMOC processes. NGO's and the U. S. military working together toward a common goal is not a natural relationship. Successful employment of the CMOC is what will bring it all together and keep the U. S. military/NGO team connected and achieving unity of effort in MOOTW.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joint Pub 3-08, Vol. I, p I-1.

<sup>2</sup> "National Power and the Interagency Process," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 8 (Summer 1995), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "The Somalia Saga: A Personal Account 1990-1993", by Jan Westcott, p. 37. [Hereafter cited as Westcott Report.]

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Kennedy, "The Relationship Between the Military and Humanitarian Operations in Operation Restore Hope," unpublished paper, p. 2. [Hereafter cited as Kennedy paper.]

<sup>5</sup> Westcott Report, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Westcott Report, p. 31. "The voice on the other end announced that he was calling from the SS Tripoli and wanted more information on the landing since a "Mr. Westcott's " name was included on his list of people involved in the advance party for the landing of the Marines." (p. 31).

<sup>7</sup> On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the Marine JTF, according to its international make-up, became known as the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in support of UNOSOM, the U. N. Operation in Somalia.

<sup>8</sup> Kennedy Paper, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Dworken, "Observations from Restore Hope," p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen M. Epstein, "JTF Haiti: A United Nations Foreign Internal Defense Mission." Special Warfare Vol. 7 #3. (July 1994), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)

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